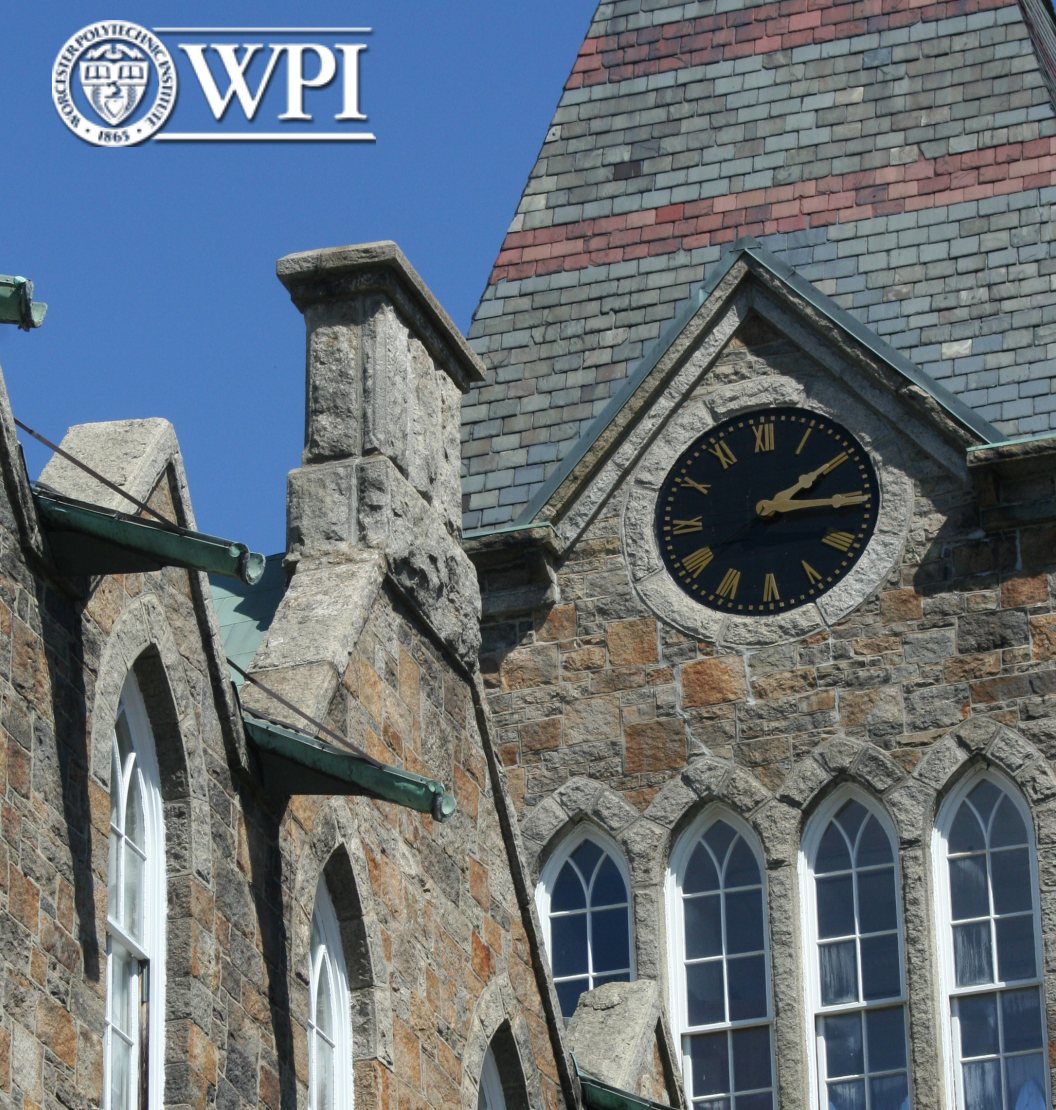




**WPI**



**A Student Guide to the**

# **Humanities & Arts**

**Project Requirement**



**Worcester Polytechnic Institute**

# Overview

The Humanities and Arts Requirement empowers students to meet the broad educational goals of WPI. The balance between technological and humanistic education and the emphasis on inquiry-based approaches to student learning have been and remain hallmarks of a WPI education. In concert with WPI's other degree requirements, the humanities and arts requirement embodies the institute's definition of an educated person. The humanities and arts requirement engages students with theory and practice—Lehr und Kunst—through the following educational goals.

## Goals of the Humanities and Arts Project

- \* to introduce students to the breadth, diversity, and creativity of human experience as expressed in the humanities and arts
- \* to develop students' ability to think critically and independently about the world
- \* to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively with others in a spirit of openness and cooperation
- \* to enrich students' understanding of themselves
- \* to deepen students' ability to apply concepts and skills in a focused thematic area through sustained critical inquiry
- \* to encourage students to reflect on their responsibilities to others in local, national and global communities
- \* to kindle in students a life-long interest in the humanities and arts

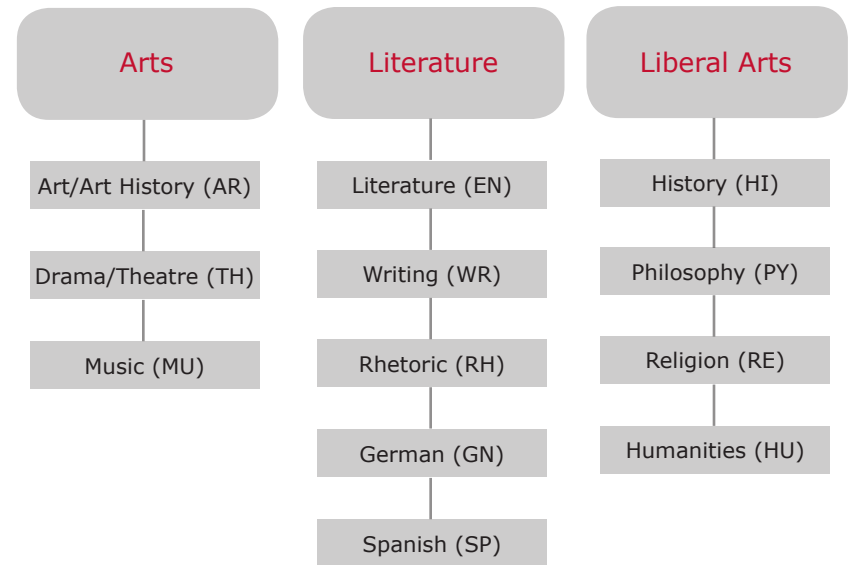
## Depth & Breadth

Students meet the Humanities and Arts degree requirement by completing six courses to ensure breadth and depth. In short, the requirement asks for five courses plus one concluding project in an area of focus. The concluding project is completed during an inquiry seminar or a practicum.

In selecting the five courses before the concluding project, students must complete breadth and depth components. To ensure breadth, students select at least one course each from two of three different intellectual clusters (right). To ensure depth, students complete an area of focus with at least one course at the 2000-level or above and an inquiry seminar or practicum (HU3900 or equivalent). Students may take six courses in a foreign language as an exception to the breadth component, but their sequence of foreign language courses still culminates in a seminar or practicum. All advanced level (3000 or above) foreign language courses incorporate a practicum element.

## Areas of Focus

You can focus your Humanities Project on a variety of topics. Below are the three Intellectual Clusters that group similar topics together:



Students are required to take a minimum of two classes in one Intellectual Cluster and a minimum of one class in a different Intellectual Cluster. The easiest way to plan a Humanities and Arts project is to first pick which topic is most interesting. That topic should become the project's focal point. Second, pick a topic outside that Intellectual Cluster that relates to the main topic. Fill in the remaining classes (two) with related material (its best to stay in or close to the main topic). Finally, pick an inquiry seminar or practicum to complete.



### When should I start this project?

Now! But it's not crucial that you drop everything to get it done. Most students start their HUA their freshman year and finish when they're sophomores. However, you may complete the project anytime before graduation. Taking three Humanities classes a year is a good pace. Work with your academic advisor.

# Concluding Project

The culmination of the depth component of the humanities and arts requirement is an inquiry seminar or practicum. An inquiry seminar or practicum must be taken only after all five Humanities courses have been completed. This culminating class is required for every Humanities and Arts project regardless of topic area.

## Inquiry Seminar

As the student's capstone experience in the humanities and arts, the Inquiry Seminar is intended to help students take their knowledge of the humanities to a higher level. The purpose of the Inquiry Seminar, therefore, is not to provide a broad survey or general introduction to a given discipline, but to provide a structured forum in which students might approach a specific humanities-related problem or theme at a deeper, more sustained level of intellectual engagement than would normally be possible within a traditional course setting. The pedagogical idea behind the Inquiry Seminar is that work in the humanities and arts is at once an intensely personal enterprise, in which the individual freely draws on her or his own particular interests, abilities, passions, and commitments, and at the same time a form of ethical community in which the practitioner is always in conversation with and accountable to others.

It is important to note that not all Seminars are Inquiry Seminars. Inquiry Seminars also require students to gain personal permission from the instructor leading the class. Inquiry Seminars are usually small, so students should talk to the instructor early.

## Inquiry Practicum

Students in the performing arts have the option to complete their Humanities and Arts sequence with an Inquiry Practicum in music or drama/theatre. A practicum shares the same goals and objectives of an inquiry seminar but provides students with a production/performance experience which emphasizes the hands-on, practical application of skills and knowledge gained from previous Humanities and Arts courses. Samples of practicums in music include composing, arranging, or performing a solo recital. Drama/Theatre students may choose to act, direct, or design for a campus production. In addition to weekly meetings, students may be required to attend rehearsals and performances. The design of the final project is determined through conversations between instructors and students. Due to the unique nature of the practicum, permission of the instructor is required to enroll in a practicum.

Students may complete the Humanities and Arts Requirement with a creative project that takes place over an academic term and is equivalent to one course. Such creative projects have been the outcome of course sequences in art, drama/theatre, music, and writing/communication. Consent of the instructor is required.



Do I have to complete the Breadth requirement if I use a foreign language as my Depth requirement?

No. Foreign Languages are exempt from the Breadth requirement because foreign language instruction is broadly interdisciplinary and includes elements of the history, literature, and culture of a particular language area. You can simply take six foreign language classes culminating in an advanced level course (which includes the practicum element).



Can I use a foreign language to fulfill my Breadth requirement?

Yes. However, many language courses reserve seats in the class for those taking all six courses in that language. The best practice is to speak directly with the professor teaching the class to secure entrance with their permission.



What is a GPS and will it help with my Humanities project?

GPS stands for "Great Problem Seminar." The GPS is a freshman specific, two-term course that gives students hands-on experience solving current, real-world issues. Students taking these courses receive dual credit which often includes a general Humanities credit. The GPS program is highly recommended for any freshman.



Where can I find a list of Inquiry Seminars and Practicums?

The Humanities and Arts website has a list of current Inquiry Seminars and Practicums. The Humanities and Arts office in Salisbury Labs also keeps a list of Inquiry Seminars and Practicums on file. Practicums can be setup with professors on an individual basis as well.



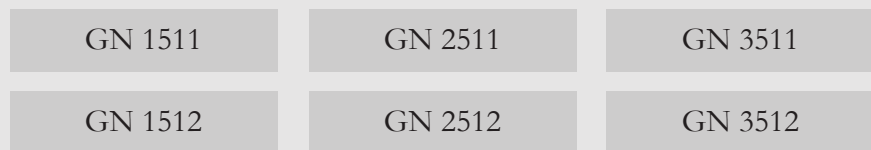
## What is an example Humanities and Arts project?

Here are two example projects:

1) Dan came to WPI with one AP credit in French, took three English Literature courses and one American History course. After meeting the depth and breadth requirements, he took an Inquiry Seminar where he wrote two essays about a novel and its historical context in reform.



2) Jen had a passion for languages and decided to complete her HUA in German. She took a sequence of six German classes, the last of which counted as an Inquiry Seminar.



Notice that in both Dan's and Jen's case, all of their classes complimented each other. This is a good practice.

# Humanities & Arts Requirement Worksheet (Abridged)

- At least two courses in an area of focus selected from one of the following intellectual clusters (at least one of these two courses must be at the 2000-level or above):
  - Art/art history, drama/theatre, and music (AR, MU, TH)
  - Languages, literature, and writing/rhetoric (EN, SP, GN, WR, RH)
  - History, humanities, philosophy, and religion (HI, HU, PY, RE)
- At least one course in an intellectual cluster outside the area of focus for the breadth component.
- One concluding project (inquiry seminar or practicum) in the area of focus taken after the completion of five courses in the Humanities and Arts. Two courses and an inquiry seminar or practicum (HU3900 or HU3910) in the same area of focus fulfill the depth component.
- In foreign languages, students may take five language courses followed by an advanced-level course which serves as a practicum; see instructors in foreign languages for more information.

*Depth Component:* List at least two Humanities & Arts courses in the same area of focus that you plan for your inquiry seminar or practicum. See #1 and #3 above:

Course No.	Course Title	Instructor	Grade	Term

*Breadth Component:* List at least one Humanities & Arts courses selected from a different intellectual cluster than the courses listed in preceding table. See #2 above.

Course No.	Course Title	Instructor	Grade	Term

*Concluding Project:* identify an inquiry seminar or practicum in your area of focus. Before you may take the concluding inquiry seminar or practicum, you must have completed five courses in the Humanities & Arts.

HU3900/HU3910	Seminar/Practicum Title	Instructor	Term

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